

# May 2003: Where Hope Is Found

by Aaron Greenway

*Hope* is a word often used in our language. We say, “I hope this will happen, I hope that will happen, I hope I have enough money, etc.” We hope for the best in our lives. We hope we can pay the bills. But do we really understand the meaning of true hope?

*Él Es Tu Dios*, translated as “He Is Your God” is a book written by Shirley Alman, about her life story as a missionary. Her and her husband are directors of Youth With a Mission (YWAM) in Latin America and for many years directed centers in Colombia and Argentina preparing young missionaries to go out and share the gospel. She tells about a certain man from a terrorist organization in Peru. She writes (translated from the Spanish), “One day in 1991, we received a call from a missionary in Peru that alerted us of the arrival of a student that would come to Castelar base. The little that was told to us by phone put us on guard and awakened our curiosity. Jorge Rios had commanded 280 men from *Sendero Luminoso*, a Peruvian terrorist group, famous for their extreme violence and torture techniques. So it was no surprise that this group boarded up churches full of people and set it on fire or rolled a granade inside.

“So when Jorge arrived to our base in Argentina we welcomed him, but with cautiousness. No one really knew his story. We agreed to let him live at the base for a year in order to get adjusted to Christian life and know what missionary life was like. Then, if everything went well, we would accept him as a student. Meanwhile we took care of normal jobs at the base.

**My friends, this is an example of one thing, not that there is a God (*even though there is*), and not that God can do miracles (*even though He can and does*), but this is an example of the power of the resurrected Christ.**

**There is no *hope* beyond that act.**

**Everything in Christianity is wrapped up in the cross and the resurrection of the Son.**

“Little by little his story was unfolding. He killed a lot of people, including people that worked in the Lord’s work. In combat he fell gravely wounded and they carried him to a town to give him treatment. There he met a blind pastor who preached to him. Jorge defended his marxist ideals and rejected the gospel. That pastor told him, ‘When you are in the most difficult moments of your life, cry out to the Lord and He will hear you.’ Jorge was healed and incorporated back into the revolution again. A few days later, he was captured and sentenced to die. While he waited for his execution he looked back at all the bad things that he had done in his life and then remembered the words of the pastor. He cried out to the Lord and asked Him for help, promising to follow Him with all of his heart.

“Immediately, the handcuffs opened, the bandages fell off and miraculously the army let him go free. He then looked for the blind pastor and told him that he wanted to be saved. Communism was not good enough for him anymore. He needed God. The pastor led him to the Lord who then defended Jorge’s case before the authorities. The accusations were dropped, the antecedents destroyed. The missionary, that knew the work of God and also about YWAM, called us to ask us to accept him into our base.

“When the discipleship school began, he had become familiarized with the lifestyle of our community, completing faithfully everything we asked him. He asked if he could come to our classes just to listen. We saw his hunger for God. He was dilligent in his devotional life.” Shirley goes onto to write that he was accepted into the program, married an Argentine girl and eventually became a captain of a team.

My friends, this is an example of one thing, not that there is a God (even though there is), and not that God can do miracles (even though He can and does), **but this is an example of the power of the resurrected Christ.** There is no *hope* beyond that act. Everything in Christianity is wrapped up in the cross and the resurrection of the Son. And to this day, people’s lives are being changed. The Muslum world is being toppled as the Gospel is ripping through with testimonies of visions of the Savior preaching them the Gospel. In Latin America, God is raising up an army of missionaries that are looking to go to the Middle East to preach, knowing that

their “white” brothers and sisters would be harmed and that they, the Peruvians, would have a better chance of reaching them.

If our lives are full of hopelessness, there is ONE hope...that is, Jesus. He is the hope for all the world. He is life and so if He were still in His grave, the rest of it would be for nothing. Where is our hope today? Hope is not found in circumstances, it is found the embodiment of God Himself who took on your and my sin and died, and then rose victoriously over death. Because of this, lives are changed. Relationships are restored. Sins are forgiven. Hardness is softened. The empty tomb continues to revolutionize and conquer the lives of sinful human beings and turn them into saints. My friend, nothing else compares.

Romanas 1:16 “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew and then for the Gentile.”